

John 8: Where are we now?

RECENT HISTORY: Between the Old and New Testaments (400 years), the Hebrews were under the rule of Persian, Greek, and Roman world powers. About 200BC, they were severely oppressed by the Greeks from Syria. The king of the Syrians (Antiochus), was absolutely determined to Hellenize the Jews - so he outlawed the Sabbath, circumcision, and the study of Torah under pain of death.

Sacrifices were ordered to be performed to Zeus and other Greek gods, even in the Temple itself. A massive statue of the Syrian king was placed in the holy of holies. The great altar of the temple was defiled by the offering of pigs upon it. Their entrails were dragged around the temple courts, defiling everything they touched. It was a time of great anguish for the Jewish people.

BRIEF TEMPLE HISTORY:

- 1) Solomon + all of Israel built the first temple in 1000BC. God's presence filled the temple (1 Kings 8 = cloud; 2 Chronicles 7:1-23 = fire). God's presence leaves the temple and it is utterly destroyed by Babylon in 586BC (Ezekiel 10)
- 2) Nehemiah + Ezra + Cyrus (Persia) + remnant of Judeans build 2nd temple in 535BC. There is no ark of the covenant or cherubim (no cloud or fire) in this temple.
- 3) Herod the Great (self proclaimed, Roman wanna-be; 'King of the Jews') wanted to make the temple in Jerusalem more glorious than that of King Solomon; completed construction of a magnificently restored 2nd temple in 20BC (3X5 football fields). This is the temple whose 'veil' was torn (90 feet tall). It was destroyed in 70AD by Titus (Rome).

REVOLT + FREEDOM FROM SYRIAN/GREEK RULE: An old priest, Mattathias, began a revolt by refusing to make the royal sacrifice to Antiochus in a small town near Jerusalem. His son, **Judah Maccabee**, leads a group of freedom fighters against the far stronger Greek army. Trusting in God to save them, these rebels miraculously defeated the king's army and reclaimed Jerusalem. Judah ordered a complete cleansing and rededication of the temple and the altar that had been destroyed was rebuilt.

THE MENORAH, or eternal light, in the Holy of Holies had been extinguished while Jerusalem was under Syrian control. Though only a small supply of sacred oil remained, Judah ordered the

lamp lit. Miraculously, it burned for eight days, the entire time of the rededication of the temple, when new oil was purified. Every year this miracle and the events surrounding it are remembered at Hanukkah.

The celebration of this great deliverance of God became known as the **Feast of Dedication**, or Hanukkah (Jesus celebrates John 10:22-23). Judah ordered Sukkot to be held even though the time was past. *So the Sukkot celebration took on even greater happiness as it recalled God's miraculous deliverance and preservation of his people and his temple for a third time.*

NOW WE COME TO THE FEAST OF SUCCOT WHERE JESUS IS IN JOHN 8: Otherwise known as the 'Feast of Booths' (Deuteronomy 16:13-15; Leviticus 23, Numbers 29) - 'The Great Feast' - The Feast of our Joy' . It was the first feast celebrated after return from exile... (Nehemiah 8).

THINK FESTIVAL: It was a family affair (Deut: 16:13-19). All Israel looked forward to all year. Israel gathered 'as one man' upon Jerusalem this week. Abundance. Post harvest. Wine + Figs + oil + grains etc. Colorfully decorated booths. View to the (Abraham, divine) stars. Feasting + Dancing. Followed on the heels (5 days after) Yom Kippur when sins were forgiven. Every family brought a sacrifice. ***"Happy is every man on whom guilt rests; and he who having sinned is now w/ pardon blessed."***

LIGHT CEREMONY: (see picture) Held in the Women's Court which was also known as the treasury. Four, 75-ft tall candelabras (each holding four, ten-gallon bowls). In the treasury there are 13 trumpet shaped receptacles to receive tithes. This is where the widow gave her two mites, the children shouted "Hoshana!" at the Triumphal entry, and where Judas tried to return the silver he'd been given to betray Jesus. The receptacles only accepted Jewish \$ (no pagan coins) and so there were money changers who would change your currency (for a small fee...)

The huge candelabras were lit every evening of Succoth in the women's court. Jugglers with flaming torches, musicians, and dancers performed. Every household in Jerusalem was filled with light from the temple. Intended to represent the Shekinah glory. "You've not known joy until you've seen

SACRIFICES: AM + PM. All daily sacrifices at the temple were accompanied by wine poured out on alter. Every household brought their own animal (imagine the sound of so many creatures!) This festival week only included the addition of **water** poured out on the alter with the wine (see below). Also! **80 bulls** sacrificed (per Numbers 29). They have been counted and dedicated for the sins of the nations whose God was not Yahweh. This feast in particular was a holiday that took seriously God's intention that Israel would bless the nations (Zechariah 14:16) ***"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light."*** (Isaiah 9:2)

WATER CEREMONY: Before the sun rose, the priest went out the 'Water Gate' carrying a golden pitcher. He walked directly towards the sun (east), then turned away from the sun towards the temple (west) He would pray: ***"Our fathers when they were in this place turned their faces toward the east, and they worshipped the sun toward the east; but as for us, our eyes are turned toward the LORD."*** Then he would walk down the many, many steps to the pool of Shilom (the original spring-source of Jerusalem's water) and fill it with water. **This water was literally called "Yeshua" – the waters of salvation.** Living water (Exodus 17).

THE ASCENT: The priest would walk all the way back up to the temple, accompanied by flutes and tambourines, and children singing and dancing, and take the water up to the alter. Then he would pour the water and the wine on the alter at the same time and pray in front of the people "HOSHANNA RABBA" a request for great salvation. All the people would wave their palms (lulavs) and the priest would pray even more loudly, ***"Please God, rescue us! Please God, save us! Please hear our prayer!"***. The water and wine runs off the south end of the threshold of the temple. **HYPER-LINK:** (Ezekiel 47:1-12; Revelation 21:22-22:5).

1ST CENTURY SUCCOT CUSTOMS NOW HAVE ADDED MEANING:

- 1. The palm branch has become the symbol of political as well as religious freedom
- 2. The chant of '**HOSHANNA!** or "O Lord, save us" now means not only the salvation of deliverance from Egypt (Moses), not only the provision of rain for next year's harvest, not only the forgiveness of sins requested by the sacrifices, but it also was a prayer for political freedom.

WHAT IS JESUS CLAIMING ACCORDING TO JOHN?

- He is the Living Water (Exodus 17).
- He is the Shekinah glory ('*shekinot*' - to settle in; dwell with).

- He will be pierced for Israel's sin, and all *Adam's* sin (John 19)
- It will be *his* blood and *his* life-water poured out on the alter to be the "HOSHANNA RABBA".
"Please God, rescue us! Please God, save us! Please hear our prayer!"
- As fully man (seed of the woman), he will physically thirst. "I thirst" (John 19)
- He is the host of the GREAT FEAST OF THE LAMB (John 2; Revelation 21:22-22:5)
- He is the King and Redeemer of all the nations.(Zechariah 14:6-9)

John 8: 1-46

[Read 8:1-11]

1. While Jesus is teaching the people in the temple, the Jewish authorities bring a woman to Jesus who they claim was caught in the act of adultery. What does the Torah command in the case of adultery? (Leviticus 20:10; Deut. 22:22). Why was this command given by Yahweh to the people of Israel in the first place?

2. The Scribes and Pharisees were proficient in the scriptures. What prophetic meaning would they have attached to the act of Jesus bending down to write in the sand? (Jeremiah 17:1,13; 2:13). Who was Jeremiah's target audience? What was Jeremiah witness to (Jeremiah 52)?

3. Had the Jewish leaders been in pursuit of justice they would have taken the woman to the appropriate authorities. Under Roman rule, 'the Jews' did not have the authority to execute law-breakers (see John 18:31) as Rome retained for itself the right of life and death over its subjects. So what point is Jesus making when he says to them, "He that is without sin . . ."

4. Jesus bends down to write in the sand a second time, and when he stands up, all the woman's accusers have left. What does Jesus understand about the Torah - what law does he keep - when he does not condemn the guilty woman? (Deut.17:6)

[Read John 8:12-30]

5. Where is the treasury (v20) within the temple complex? What is another name for this area and what is unique about this location? (hint: a major event happens in this area each night during the Feast of Succoth; John 7)

6. 'Walking in darkness' (v12) is a favorite phrase of the Hebrew prophets in the Old Testament. Find three examples and familiarize yourself with each prophet's historical context. What does Jesus using this deliberate phrase mean to his audience?

7. What does John intend for his audience to understand when he records Jesus announcing to the Judean temple authorities that he is the 'light of the world? Why would the Pharisees and authorities find this light analogy so very offensive? (Isaiah 60:1-3; 19-22; Daniel 2:20-23)

8. Self- testimony is considered a weak defense in any courtroom. What two surprising claims does Jesus make (v14-15) about his testimony? How is Jesus both not a judge (v15) and also a judge (v16) at the same time?

9. Read Isaiah 52:13. Who was Isaiah's audience and what was the context? Now read John 8:28-30 and compare the two passages in light of the context of John 8.

[Read John 8: 31-47]

10. What is the condition for being a true disciple according to Jesus (v31). In your own words, what does Jesus mean when he says to those who believed in him, "...abide in my word and you will know the truth and be free...."?

11. What is almost laughable about the Judean's response to Jesus in v. 33? The nation of Israel was enslaved by what foreign nations? (pick two, three, or more). Who were the primary gods and rulers of those nations? How did the Hebrews gain 'freedom' from those nations?

12(a) John describes several types of households which include a father, a son, offspring, and even slaves. Who does Jesus say is the father - the master - of the household of the Judean authorities? What does he say is the mark of that household? (see also Genesis 4)

b) Who do the Judean temple authorities claim as *their* father? What marks them as a part of this household in their minds? What text(s) would they use to support that claim?

c) Who do the temple authorities suggest is Jesus' father? What marks him as a part of that household, according to them?

d) Who does Jesus claim is his father? What does he say is the mark of a person who is born or adopted into his Father's household?

13. Why do you think John records this particular conversation in such detail?

14. What is the mark of being a member of the household of God today?